

The LENINIST

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Communism lives!

"On a lighter note, let us turn to the suspension of the Communist Party"
- Boris Yeltsin

IN THE aftermath of counterrevolutionary August we can expect the barrage of bourgeois triumphalist slander against communism, against the very idea of a Communist Party, to intensify dramatically.

"We are witnessing a counterrevolution", *The Independent* told us in one of their more honest editorials. "The beginning of the end of the Communist Party" (August 24). The "Party is over" the *Financial Times* reassured itself, for while "President Gorbachev ... pleaded against using rough Bolshevik tactics against the party ... it was too late" (August 24-25).

The Euros, as a micro-tendency within bourgeois politics, have been quick to add their shrill little squeaks to the ruling class cacophony. Nina Temple, secretary of the rump Euro clot, tells us that "the party is over. The tradition that emerged from the 1917 Russian revolution, with the common features in every country of Marxism-Leninism and democratic centralism, has been identified with a period of history that is exhausted" (*Changes*, August 31-September 13 1991).

At last, the bourgeoisie believes that it has exorcised the "spectre" that took (for them) terrifyingly solid form in the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution. They want, they need, to believe that they have beaten not simply this or that communist party, this or that revolution. No, they want the working class to believe that they have beaten *communism* itself: that Marxism has revealed itself to be nothing more than "the western mask on the face of age-old oriental despotisms" (*Financial Times* editorial, August 24-25).

Throughout its history, the bourgeoisie has felt the constant need to repeatedly tell us that Marxism was dead. This or that new theory, this or that desertion from our ranks, this or that change in the composition of the proletariat - everything was marshalled in the ruling class' campaign against communism. Marxism has been "buried" more often than Count Dracula. We predict that the bourgeoisie will feel the need in the not too distant future to again try to entomb Marxism.

There is no doubt that the implosion of bureaucratic socialism, objectively representing the defeat of the October revolution, has passed an enormously powerful propaganda weapon into the hands of our enemies. We can be sure that they will exploit it for all their worth.

It is necessary therefore to steel ourselves in the theory of communism. And it is particularly important to restate once again - forcefully - the basic Marxist approach to the question of Party and class.

This is a job for Leninists uniquely. We can expect no help from the Trotskyites and petty bourgeois left in Britain. Almost to an organisation, they have celebrated alongside the bourgeoisie the defeat of workers' power in the east. None have an understanding of the

need for, the importance of, a Communist Party. All, to one degree or another, have tailed the reactionary spontaneous mass movements in the ex-socialist countries.

Every week, *Socialist Worker's* "What We Stand For" column advertises the organisation's commitment to building a "revolutionary socialist party". Precisely what type of "revolutionary socialist" organisation the SWP is hoping to build is prominently advertised by their response to the August counterrevolution - "Communism has Collapsed - Now Fight for Real Socialism" (August 31).

The SWP is simply the most explicit anti-party, anti-communist group in the mainstream revolutionary left. All suffer to one extent or another from more or less the same disease, however.

Workers Power, the Workers Revolu-

tionary Party, Militant Tendency et al, all invested the spontaneous movement of the working class in the east with revolutionary properties, despite the nature of the leadership of these movements. All, to one degree or another, bowed to the spontaneously formed anti-communist consciousness of the workers in the erstwhile socialist countries. Alone on the left, we underlined the fact that without a Communist Party, without a conscious revolutionary vanguard, the mass movements of Eastern Europe and the USSR were bound to assume counter-revolutionary forms.

In the first place, we should be clear what a party is. Zinoviev, in his *History of the Bolshevik Party*, tells us that "a party is part of a particular class." A party is not simply a group of like minded people sharing some common

set of ideas that, irrespective of their links with this or that class, they preach wherever they wish. The word 'party' has a very precise, definite meaning.

The Communist Party is a part of the working class - "the most advanced and resolute section ... that section that pushes forward all the others; on the other hand, theoretically, they [the communists] have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement" (*The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels).

A Communist Party is not an optional extra for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, therefore. The Communist Party is the tangible embodiment of the class consciousness of the working class itself.

In contrast to other revolutionary classes in history, the working class is uniquely dispossessed. It owns nothing aside from its ability to labour. The bourgeoisie was able to grow and accumulate capital within the womb of feudalism. Its wealth and social 'pull' meant that it was able to recruit whole swathes of the old society to its revolutionary banner.

The proletariat has nothing aside from its ideology, expressed through the clarity of vision and purpose of its Communist Party. This is the real meaning of Lenin's adage that without organisation, the proletariat is nothing; with it, it is everything.

Petty bourgeois opponents of Marxism - anarchists, liberals and (in practice - witness Eastern Europe) Trotskyites - deny the need for the Party. The 'self liberation' of the working class is cretinously interpreted to mean that the proletariat does not need a leadership, a vanguard section.

The leading role of the working class comes from its position in the capitalist process of production. To conclude from this, however, that the class will simply evolve spontaneously towards communist consciousness is simply stupid. As Lenin puts it:

"It is often said that the working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism. That is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory reveals the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory and for this reason the workers are able to assimilate it so easily, provided, however, this theory does not itself yield to spontaneity, provided it subordinates spontaneity to itself" (*CW*, Vol 5, p386 - footnote).

The mass upsurges in the socialist countries from 1989 onwards, while often sociologically working class in composition, were counterrevolutionary in political essence. Unlike the Trotskyites, communists do not conflate the two. Without conscious, that is communist, leadership, the ideas of the working class will flow along what Lenin called "the line of least resistance", in today's conditions towards bourgeois ideas, towards bourgeois ideology which is immeasurably stronger, immeasurably more widely disseminated than revolutionary ideas. Bourgeois ideas are spontaneously generated; communist ideas must be consciously fought for.

The tragedy of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where the working class has been rallied in its millions to the banner of counterrevolution, underlines yet again this lesson. Without the Communist Party, the working class can only form the appendage of bourgeois politics of one sort or another.

Now is the time for all communists to rally to the defence of the Communist Party. The working class in the Soviet Union will one day recreate its Communist Party as a proud section of a reformed Communist International, the world Party of revolution.

Long live Communism!

Ian Mahoney

Hands Off Cuba!

THE AUGUST counterrevolution in what was the Soviet Union has placed Cuba in immediate danger. It has intensified the world isolation of Cuban socialism and bolstered the revanchist, counterrevolutionary juggernaut of the west. "Three down, one to go" - after Grenada, Panama and Nicaragua, the US imperialists openly announce their intentions against the Cuban people.

The Cuban revolution has been a beacon to the peoples of the region throughout the past 32 years. The Cubans have made huge advances in education, health and social services and there is no doubt that the regime is underpinned by mass support.

The counterrevolutionary duo, Gorbachev and Yeltsin, are keen to ingratiate themselves with the US. They have given their tacit go-ahead to the 'new world order' plans of the Pentagon.

On September 11, without even consulting the Cuban government, Gorbachev announced that 11,000 Soviet troops stationed on the island were to be withdrawn. As a statement from the Cuban foreign ministry underlined, the Soviet troops had "rather a symbolic character as far as the defence of Cuba is concerned."

The withdrawal of the symbolic military presence of the Soviet Union, along with the ending of the rather less symbolic protection of the Soviet nuclear umbrella, is a green light to US imperialism. The traitors who have led the counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the USSR have already participated in a series of provocations against Cuba.

Countries like Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland have supported an imperialist-inspired UN resolution on Cuban violations of human

rights. The hypocrisy of the imperialists and their hangers-on is sickening.

We expect this from the imperialists, it is in their nature. As they prepare for the assault on Cuban socialism - an assault which, given the new context in international relations and the triumph of counterrevolution, may well take the form of a military intervention to "prevent a Tiananmen Square massacre" - we must expect all sorts of slanders from them. But it is time they were answered.

The Cuban people under the leadership of their Communist Party have an honourable history of international solidarity. Communists from Cuba fought shoulder to shoulder with the peoples of Spain during the Spanish civil war, and more recently with the people of Algeria, Angola, Syria, Ethiopia, Namibia, Mozambique as well as Latin American countries. The working class of the world now needs to return that solidarity in kind.

We need to build a powerful world movement of solidarity with the gains of the Cuban revolution. The forthcoming October 10 congress of the Communist Party of Cuba is concentrating on "internal problems", said a spokeswoman. Because of this, the comrades have decided not to invite foreign journalists, nor foreign political delegations.

Of course, it is understandable that the comrades may feel the need to restrict the jackals of the foreign press. It is also understandable that they have no wish to invite the social democratised parties of what still remains of 'official communism'.

However at this crucial turning point in history, now is the time for more internationalism, not less.

Che Guevara called for one, two, many Vietnams, and used every effort to spread what had been achieved in Cuba. It is only Che's spirit of internationalism turned into concrete effect that can defend Cuba: not just throughout the oppressed nations in the US's back yard, but in the heartlands of imperialism. Workers in the imperialist nations have a key role to play in defence of Cuban socialism. In the early years of the Soviet Republic it was the revolutionary solidarity of European workers that was key in saving the young revolutionary state. Demonstrations, strikes and the threat of mass revolutionary action caused imperialism to abandon wars of intervention against the Bolsheviks and broke the imperialist blockade.

Things are different today. The collapse of the Soviet Union means we now swim against a much stronger reactionary tide. Yet that makes internationalism all the more important. It will take more than buying Cuban rum or sending one-off ships to defend the Cuban revolution. Imperialist hands will only be forced off Cuba by an international movement of the working class that draws on the experience of the Hands Off Russia campaign of 70 years ago. At this juncture, active defence of socialist Cuba is the touchstone for all socialists, revolutionaries and communists.

We send our revolutionary greetings to the October 10 congress of the Communist Party of Cuba - a "congress under arms"!

We pledge to do our part in building a solidarity movement that short-circuits the imperialist plans before they even get airborne! Long live socialist Cuba!



Central Organ of the
Provisional Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Great Britain

AS WE have long predicted, Militant Tendency has split along left-right lines - confirmation comes from the fact that it has not been reported in *Militant*. The trigger was obviously Walton. Some of its leaders were prepared to remain silent as long as it was a one-off. Others were determined to take things further. But whatever the subjective fears or beliefs of this or that individual, there can be no doubt that Walton saw Militant break with its own programme in practice.

The backtrackers say keep heads down in the Labour wards and hope for better days. For them the 2,613 votes in Walton is no "pointer to the future". Rather it is a dire warning that the whole 40 year entryist project is about to be wrecked. The majority disagree. They want to generalise from Walton 'Real Labour' (Glasgow Pollock, Glasgow Govan, Coventry South-east, Liverpool Broadgreen have all been suggested along with Walton for the coming general election).

Militant's central committee split 46:3 over the question. In numerical terms a minority of three is nothing. But these three are not any old three. They consist of Ted Grant, the organisation's founder and leading theorist, Rob Sewell, national organiser and Alan Woods, editor of *Militant International Review*.

In a document leaked to *The Guardian*, the three make clear their opposition to Militant's *New Turn*, describing it as "ultra-left adventurism" (September 3 1991). They also admit that the "active base of the Tendency in Britain and internationally has shrunk" and that Kinnock's purge and a general downturn on the left means "objective difficulties".

Argument has been bitter and personal. The majority implies that Grant is getting crusty, if not senile; that with Kinnock's shift to the right a vacuum exists on the left: "It would be criminal to pass over an immediate opportunity for expansion in order that we may cling to our few remaining points of support within the Labour Party" (*The Guardian* September 6 1991). The minority complains of a "clique" operating "outside the formal structure of the Tendency" which has attempted to shield "individuals from criticism" and "gag" dissidents.

Such a split was easy to predict. Militant is an organisation which long ago abandoned the revolutionary theory that once gave it a sense of cohesion. It has become social democratised. Such politics inevitably engender a tendency to split along left-right lines. The present contradictory dynamics of the Labour Party moving to the right on the one hand, and the experience Militant had of fronting the truly mass anti-poll tax movement on the other, only speeded up the schism that was already there.

The more Militant recruited and was successful, the more it was accused by Kinnock and the Labour Party mainstream of being the problem. For a Militant rank and file impatient to fight the system, the Labour Party was becoming the problem.

From our point of view this development is good. We want militants and Militant to break from the Labour Party. Outside the Labour Party there is one real question: the necessity of building a Communist Party. Only with such a Party can our class smash this rotten capitalist system and build a real new world order, socialism. Those who refuse to face this question are doomed to permanent sect-like status or vicarious Labourism.

Because we recognise the importance of Militant as a group, the roots it has in the working class and the good comrades it has in its ranks, we have done our utmost to encourage a break from the Labour Party and the taking up of the one task worthy of genuine partisans of the working class: reorganising the Communist Party of Great Britain along the ideological and organisational lines it was founded on in July 1920.

The "communism is dead" Socialist Workers Party has a different project. It wants a half way house centrist party. A few years ago it made a great song and dance about an 'open letter' proposing a straight organisational merger with Militant. Nowhere was the necessity for scientific Marxist ideology mentioned, nor the need for a "party of a new type". Not surprisingly the SWP ended up losing members to Militant and the Labour Party.

Now the SWP reckons things will be different. With Militant at sixes and sevens and Kinnock burying the last vestiges of Benism, it has launched an 'open letter' mark two. This calls for the building of a "socialist alternative" whose only defining feature seems to be that it is "outside the Labour Party" - ie the SWP. This is not only a cynical recruiting attempt, it stands witness to the SWP's own inability to build a genuine party of the new type. Not only does the SWP automatically vote Labour at every election, but its organisation is becoming thoroughly soft, inactive and social democratic.

What workers in Britain need is their Communist Party.

The Editor

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LETTERS Militant

Naivety is now all the rage among our so called 'revolutionary left'. Especially the naive idea that somehow, spontaneously, without a party, without a leadership, the working masses of the 'Soviet Union' will rise in revolt as they suffer hunger and anarchy. Riven by its tactical splits induced by the galloping class collaboration of the Kinnockite Labour Party (and the TUC), *Militant* whistles merrily in the dark, naive as anyone.

Its latest editorial has some extraordinary formulations in support of its statement that "the idea of socialism will survive in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the west, for as long as the working class continues not to receive the just rewards for their labour". Leaving aside the question of what "just rewards" are, surely socialism is not just an idea. It is a transitional phase between capitalism and communism. It is the phase following the seizure of power by the working class and the smashing of the capitalist state, which contains elements (at first large scale) of capitalism and elements of future communism. Or: workers power and to begin with capitalist productive forms.

And then: "The idea of democratic, collective ownership of industry sprang from the working people themselves," declares *Militant*.

In fact the idea of collective social ownership springs from, particularly bourgeois, even feudal, philosophers and thinkers (one could argue it goes back to primitive communism). Has *Militant* never heard of Sir Thomas More, Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor, and his *Utopia*; or John Ball of the Peasants' Revolt and his "When Adam delved..."

Marxist-Leninists argue that class consciousness and the need (not just the idea) for socialism and then communism have to be taken into the proletariat, plus the need (not just the idea) for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state. The working class has to be made class conscious.

Militant bleats (without openly saying vote Labour): "Another failure by Labour will push the most politically aware sections of workers and young people towards the idea of real socialism."

Why wait for another "failure" of a Labour government - we've already had eight of them in the past 60 odd years - and the British working class has not yet learned its lesson.

Nor will it, without a Communist Party based on the scientific socialism of Marxism-Leninism which is forged to carry the lessons of reformist, both right and left, treachery deep into the class.

Revolution and socialism will not come in Britain nor in the 'Soviet Union' just for the wishing of it. It has to be made.

H Copestake
Stoke-on-Trent

Prisoner

I have been receiving a solidarity subscription of *The Leninist* for the best part of years that I have been here in jail and I have always appreciated the quality of polemic articulated in your revolutionary publication.

These past months have been particularly eventful times with very negative implications for the cause of scientific socialism. As one who believes in the cause of communism I have found the clarity of analysis of recent events in *The Leninist*, a welcome boost in such negative times.

We here in the gulags of imperialism are in many ways isolated from the revolutionary forces and are subjected to overdoses of reactionary conjecture from the bourgeois media; we are therefore so much more appreciative of revolutionary analysis of the calibre articulated by *The Leninist*. There is no

doubt that the comrades of *The Leninist* have been to the fore in these times of counterrevolution and your principled stand in the face of such reaction is worthy of the highest praise.

Republican Socialist POW
Ireland

SWP

I received a leaflet for a meeting the other day from the Socialist Workers Party, with the heading "Communism defeated - Is there a future for socialism?". Then spread across the front page of their paper was "Communism has collapsed - Now fight for real socialism!"

Real Marxists will ask themselves why do these opportunists write such infantile drivel? Perhaps the answer could be that as they are opportunists they have never troubled to study real Marxism. Could it also be the fact that their only purpose is to sell as many of their papers as possible? After all, the slogan "Communism has collapsed" is one that would appeal to any *Mail* or *Sun* reader, and let us not forget that these have been the sentiments that have been on the lips of every bourgeois commentator since the coup.

Now that imperialism has got its 'Gorby' back safe and sound, and while we are being informed of the collapse of communism, the SWP tells us that this is a time of rejoicing!

Do members of the Socialist Workers Party also cheer at funerals?

Of course real Marxists armed with real scientific theory will see through the fog of these opportunists and urge the importance of building a real Marxist party. A Communist Party that will fight for real socialism.

John Nelson
Surrey

'Democratic socialism'

A number of Communist Party supporters attended the September 20 joint meeting organised by the *Morning Star* and *Socialist Campaign Group News* - convened under the slogan "USSR - Democratic Socialism is the Only Way Forward".

The platform speakers included Tony Chater, Ken Livingstone, Diane Abbot, Jeremy Corbyn and the Euro London District Secretary, Kate Hudson. Listening to them deplore the counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the USSR was a perverse experience. Parts of the meeting almost sounded like sitting through one of our own Communist Party seminars - only gutted of the revolutionary conclusions, of course.

But it was all there - how the workers of Eastern Europe are in for South American style living standards; how the collapse of socialism would mean attacks on the living standards and welfare gains of the western working class; how Cuban socialism is now in immediate danger and must be unconditionally defended and so on.

Of course, this simply indicates that *The Leninist* has pinpointed truth and truth is the exclusive property of no-one. But while the meeting was able to "deplore" and "grieve" at the collapse of bureaucratic socialism, the organisations and individuals present seemed totally unable to draw the correct lessons from the debacle in Moscow.

The Leninist has been able to point to the counterrevolutionary process unfolding in the USSR. This is not because, as I pointed out to one CPBer, our paper is edited by Russell Grant. Because we are Marxist and use the Marxist method, the counterrevolution came as no surprise to us. In our intervention in the meeting, our speaker pointed out that the division some were drawing between Gorbachev and the gang who usurped his authority is a

false one. Yeltsin is a counterrevolutionary - well spotted, everyone. Gorbachev is a counterrevolutionary also, and those - like the *Morning Star* - who backed him really have quite a lot of explaining to do.

Incidentally, Ken Livingstone made the acquaintance of our comrade Anne Murphy at the meeting. Anne, of course, is standing against Ken in the forthcoming general election. Our Ken, clearly, is none too pleased about this. He actually suggested that we were a front for MIS - after all, we would be "winning votes for the Tories". Diane Abbot piped up in defence of "poor Ken" and his "tight seat" (we think she was referring to his narrow majority).

In one breath Livingstone will entrance aging CPBers with lofty rhetoric about the achievements of Soviet socialism and the victory of the Bolsheviks; in the next he baits real communists in this country with GBH-type slander. Campaigning in Brent against a vote for this man's party and for a vote for Britain's Bolsheviks will be a real pleasure.

Mark Fischer
London

Apologetic

I have just read Ron Bellamy's review of the book by Medvedev and Chiesa, *Time of Change*, in the *Morning Star* September 19, which reveals more about Bellamy than about the authors or the subject. From the headline quoting Marx's general criticism of philosophy - "The point is to change it..." - one might be forgiven for expecting some type of Marxist analysis. More regular readers of the *Morning Star* might be forgiven for laughing.

Having not read the book myself I can only accept Bellamy's criticism that it is a history "confined to what happens at the highest levels". Bellamy correctly identifies this as a non-materialist historical approach, but here Bellamy's Marxism ends. He continues to confuse socialism with capitalism, revolution with counterrevolution, and the masses with the master class. "The essence of perestroika" writes Bellamy "is in the development of peoples' power". This he states in all seriousness among his conclusions, but it is in fact the most telling indication of his starting point.

Taking the glibly apologetic *Morning Star* line, Bellamy claims that the distinction between Gorbachev and previous Soviet leaders is merely how much we were allowed to know about their failings. Frankly Mr Bellamy, the bourgeois media has always gone to great pains to point out and even manufacture the failings of previous Soviet leaders while polishing Gorby until squeaky clean.

Bellamy finds no distinction between building socialism and restoring capitalism. He presents the authors as supportive of "the Soviet Union's general goals" as if this holds the same meaning for all times, and as if it still has an objective meaning as a reflection of today's reality.

I will finish on a prize example of Bellamy-banalities; he asks how, when perestroika's capitalist "children" "restore economic health ... are the burdens and gains to be apportioned"? I will let Bellamy into a not very well kept secret; under capitalism the workers get the burdens and the capitalists get the gains.

Steve Riley
Glasgow

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For reasons of political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.

WRITE OR RING

If you wish to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist*, please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX, or phone 071-431 3135.

Carthorse on the march: right, right, right

This year's TUC was a bureaucrat's affair

SINCE it became possible for Labour to get into office its relationship with the TUC has been of a very unequal sort. When its creation is in opposition the message is don't rock the boat or Labour won't get in; and when in power it is don't rock the boat or Labour will be put out.

But the drive to sacrifice defence of the working class is strongest when Labour seems electable, as this, the 123rd TUC Congress in Glasgow, proved. The sometimes vague and loose threats that "our members won't be pushed around" were almost completely missing due to careful behind the scenes fixing. As Bill Jordan succinctly put it: "Neil Kinnock has said that's the way its going to be, and this TUC agrees".

It was not surprising therefore that congress was more interesting for what was not said, who did not get in, and the motions which were not passed. To dismiss it as an entirely negative affair, however, would be to place it out of context. It is, after all, a reflection of a very bleak period in the workers' movement.

Despite the TUC being more about deals between bureaucrats than a parliament of the working class, storms do sometimes occur because of pressure from below. Who can forget the clashes over the miners' strike, Wapping, the P and O sackings and the expulsion of the EETPU. This year, however, there was little evidence of pressure from below. There was no opposition to the TUC's craven pro-imperialism during the Gulf War, no criticism of its capitulation over GCHQ workers nor the lack of a militant lead on any industrial matter. Without this, and with the collapse of bureaucratic socialism the left reformist leaders were a shadow of their former selves and their former politics.

The opening of the TUC was met by a vociferous lobby by the Unemployed Workers Charter. The message was clearly delivered: the TUC should stop selling out unemployed workers, going along with government attacks and refusing to organise a militant fightback by unemployed workers. The opening session was also greeted by the WRP (*News Line*), whose loose grip on reality is demonstrated by their annual call for a general strike irrespective of the conditions of struggle prevailing. Also outside was the Offshore Industries Liaison Committee. In a shameful act of treachery by the TUC, the OILC was barred from entering the conference centre. This is presumably because the offshore workers now find themselves in conflict with the GMB and AEU, the second and fourth largest unions in the TUC. Whereas OILC has been attempting to forge unity among offshore workers to achieve reliable safety conditions in the wake of the Piper Alpha disaster, GMB, AEU, and EETPU officials have just signed their own deal with the employers, cutting OILC out of pre-production work practices. This was the first outward sign of what promised to be a feeble TUC.

The old realist tone of Congress was set prior to its opening with the adoption of the slogan "social partnership at work", a sentiment that illustrates the TUC's grip on the reality of working class life is on a par with the WRP. Life for many workers today is uncomfortable or downright hard, even if they are organised in trade unions. The government is determined that more and more workers are not allowed even that minimal ability to protect themselves. Social partnership, the notion that the workers and employers have some unity of interest as partners, may exist in the minds of the congress platform but not in the workplace.

In the debates there was little controversy. Even though the bourgeois press made much of its rejection of the extension of Employment Training to the voluntary sector, the real impact of this decision must be seen in the light of non-cooperation with ET adopted in 1988. No action was taken against employers who made use of cheap labour, ET continues, young workers are still being subjected to hazardous, low grade workfare.

Employment Action, like ET, has simply been dropped by the TUC. Even though Kinnock was displeased, this rebuff to Labour is mere tokenism since it represents no challenge to Kinnock's own policies which will provide 'real' training for jobs. We await that one on the edges of our seats.

The bait which hooked the TUC on Kinnock's line was the 'promise' of a national minimum wage of £3.40 per hour. While reserving the right to free collective bargaining, congress agreed to support it. Frankly, even if this promise were made a reality tomorrow it would not be enough. Working a 35 hour week - and we should accept nothing less - for £3.40 an hour would mean £119 ... before tax. Today, that is before inflation has been allowed to take its effect, the minimum weekly wage should be £200 per week, or £5.70 an hour. Yet the only dissent came from Gavin Laird who, like the Tories, was against any such thing as a minimum wage. He could not tolerate the erosion of differentials between skilled and unskilled workers this would lead to. It would not. A cut in the working week and a realistic minimum wage would strengthen the bargaining position of all workers. Anyway the AEU tops need not worry about its craft jealousy, because the small print demands an economic miracle before any of Labour's social policy is implemented.

In the morass of Labour victory-building measures the general business of congress continued. Many unions presented motions expressing important objectives; these included Nupe on part time workers and the health service, Usdaw on equality for women workers, Ucat on safety in the construction industry, NUM on social security and MSF on equal rights for disabled workers. Measures adopted by these resolutions, if pursued to successful conclusions, would mean real improvements in the lives of most work-

ers.

But without forcing governments to take workers' organisations seriously, even these reforms are destined to remain on paper.

Congress is not only the occasion when action is (not) decided upon, it is also the time when the TUC has to justify its own existence. Through a General Council report which was as dry and tedious as only such documents can be, its acquittal was unimpressive.

The letters written by the gormless general secretary, Norman Willis, to the government on umpteen topics produced no results. The representations to official and trade bodies were in general rebuffed. In its report on trade union relations, the General Council finally admitted defeat in the GCHQ matter; the TUC is now paying compensation to the sacked workers. The TUC's lack of militant action has let down another group of workers.

The international work of the TUC in many areas is equally dubious. While supporting the maintenance of sanctions on South Africa, the TUC upholds its support for imperialism in the Gulf War and promotes the restoration of market economies in Eastern Europe. Throughout the report the General Council makes inflated claims as to its effectiveness. A revealing statement on restrictions imposed by the military regime in Fiji on trade union activities states that the government caved in after a meeting of the ICFTU issued a condemnation. It was only added as an afterthought that this also coincided with a planned national strike called by the Fiji TUC. It would be unwise to hold out hopes of the British TUC learning a lesson from its Fijian comrades.

Rather than inside congress, a much more lively debate was being conducted among the fringe meetings. The UWC meeting opened up the record of the TUC on unemployment and addressed the link between unemployment, militarism and Britain's role in Ireland. Complementary to this was a fringe meeting organised by the National Unemployed Centres Combine launching a new document called 'Manifesto for Jobs' which calls for a commitment to full employment by a future Labour government based on Keynesian economics. It is unfortunate that these two fringes themselves did not meet, since the outcome would probably have been very interesting. The NUCC declined an invitation to the UWC meeting.

The *Straight Left* fringe addressed 'Prospects for socialism' attracting calls for CPB-NCP unity from the floor, while the Socialist Movement presented itself as an alternative centre for activists other than Kinnock's Labour Party.

Among all these proposed solutions, *Socialist Worker* with its usual spatter of question marks, would like to know "Will Labour ever be left again?" Maybe or maybe not ... but then its not really the question.

Mike Smith

IN STRUGGLE

Contrary to what most of the left would have us believe, the Southwark Black Communities Consortium anti-fascist march through South London on Saturday August 24 was a victory for the BNP. Made up largely of paper sellers, it amounted to at most 300, not the 500 or 1,000 'estimated' by Socialist Organiser and Workers Press respectively. What was significant though was that the British National Party was able to mobilise a section of the local population, including a high percentage of young working class local men, against the march. Instead of finishing the march, as planned, with a rally, the SBCC stewards panicked. Surrounded on all sides by hostile forces, the march was eventually escorted out by the police. Contrary to what the guilty white liberals of Socialist Organiser write, the stewards did not do a "magnificent" or an "excellent job". To be fair to them, they had neither the politics nor the organisation to perform well. The debacle shows that neither marches, nor anti-racism alone, are enough. Communist ideological work must be done among the white working class - around unemployment, housing, jobs, wages, poll tax, etc. Only in this way can those who, disillusioned with the Labour Party, have momentarily turned to the fascists in despair, be given a real vision of the future worth fighting for. NP

The sporadic riots have provoked predictable responses from establishment politicians. Major has put it down to 'monkey see, monkey do' hooligans. Labour grandees have come out "harder than thou" against the Tories, calling for tougher police measures against such "thuggery". Local councils of all persuasions

have said no to the demands that their electors have been making so forcefully (democracy of the half-brick!), as if they were dealing with petulant children after yet another ostentatious toy (The authorities in Atlanta, Georgia have set a reactionary example with a night-time curfew for under 16 year olds). These riots have definitely struck a chord with many ordinary working class youth. Even the smaller of Britain's towns has seen bands of youths on the scout for police to turn over. This, of course, has little to do with the establishment's caricature of 'pit bull man'. It is a spontaneous reaction to being bottom of a pile that is getting heavier. Unlike the uprisings of 1981 and 85, this time it is not mainly black youth. Many white youth got a sniff from the poll tax that governments could be forced back by direct confrontation, and the coppers that continually harass you can bleed as easily as you or me. To hit out at the guardians of the law and order of degradation and poverty is good. But that does not mean it is spontaneously socialistic. It lacks organisation, it lacks consciousness. But it does throw up, on a small scale, the raw material for revolution: working class youth in head on conflict with the state. SQ



● Legitimate targets

In an effort to match Japanese levels of exploitation 35,000 workers in Rover plants are confronted with new conditions of employment. The bosses want to extract 50% greater productivity (from 22.5 hours per car to 15). The so called "new deal" removes all demarcation between trades and tries to impose a no strike deal through binding arbitration. The eight unions at Rover would be effectively disenfranchised in negotiations with the company, subordinating them to a single company "council" including all unionised and non-unionised employees. In return for submitting to this attack the workers are offered the dubious privilege of being able to eat in the same canteen as the bosses. The blue collar-white collar parity on holiday entitlement and sick leave, which are presented as a sweetener in the deal, should be the legitimate claim of the workers without giving up trade union rights. In fact only by defending trade union rights can these and other improvements in conditions be won. Rover workers must not be intimidated into accepting this crude speed up. SR

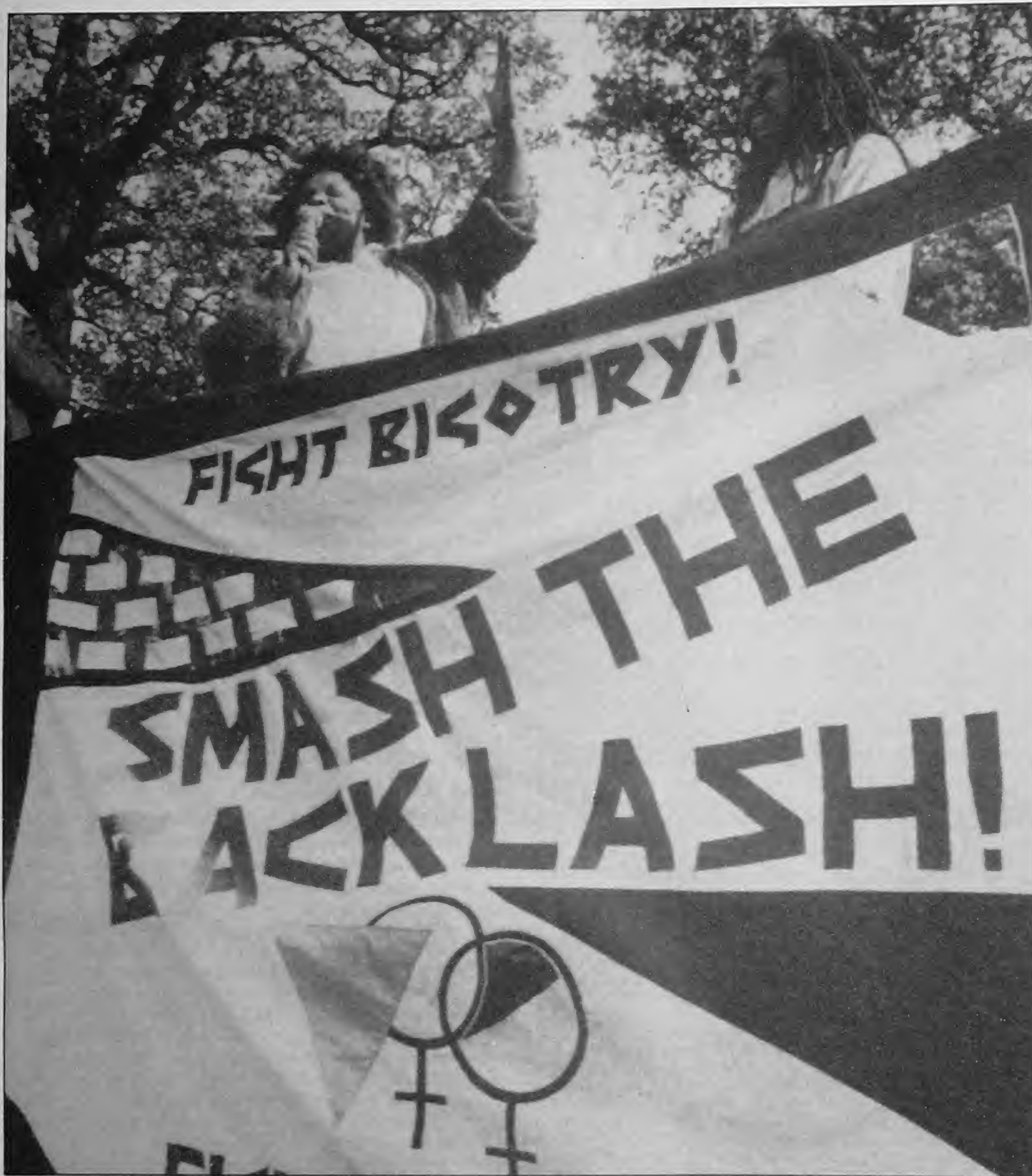
£28,885



The 8th Summer Offensive ended with a grand total of £28,885 - only just short of the £30,000 target. This impressive total has been matched by some impressive donations to our fighting fund. We have received many letters from comrades who were won to communism during the class struggles of the past - often with a cheque enclosed. Their messages have a common thread. Devastated by the current wave of defeats which culminated in the counterrevolution in the USSR, they have read *The Leninist* and are inspired by our commitment to reforge the CPGB. As one comrade put it, "The last 60 years of my life have not been in vain." The August total finished at £682. So far we have £220 for September. Post donations now so we can beat £600 again. Special thanks to comrades AS, JN, MN and CJ.

Vernon Douglas, Fund Organiser

Politics of



SM trial'. The 'crime' of the men involved was to participate in *consenting* sado-masochistic sex sessions. The state has now therefore taken it upon itself to decide what type of sex an individual 'ought' to have. In other words, if this type of sex falls outside 'normal sexuality' you face being imprisoned.

Actions by the lesbian and gay community against attacks from queerbashers and the state have, unfortunately, lacked any clear political strategy. For that to be rectified it is necessary to answer some important questions. Why are lesbians and gay men oppressed? How do we fight the prejudice that exists towards them, and how are we to gain equal rights for homosexuals?

Source of gay oppression

Despite the bombardment of anti-gay rhetoric from the 'moral majority' natural sexual instincts are moulded socially, not the word of god nor simply the needs of physical reproduction. Sexuality is a 'socio-biological' question for most higher animals, in humanity it has also become an economic question. Thus, surprise, surprise homosexuals have not always had to face oppression. In ancient Greece - a civilization much admired by our 'cultured' bigots for its achievements in the fields of mathematics, geometry, art, etc - homosexuality was considered quite natural among ruling class males. Indeed it was celebrated by their much admired poets, artists and sculptors etc. Because of this social ethos for many



Olga, Outrage and 'Outing' have been unable to defeat bigotry. Initiatives such as Lesbians and Gays support the miners showed that class action can defeat homophobia

Attacks on gays and lesbians are on the increase, both from the state and queerbashers. Why is it happening and how can it be stopped?

FOR over two decades Britain has seen an increasingly confident movement demanding full civil rights for homosexuals; around 35,000 took to the streets in June's Lesbian and Gay Pride march. There have been many gains and a steady erosion of bigotry in popular attitudes below. Above, however, in the state there have been attempts to turn the clock back, virtually back to the days before *male* homosexuality was legalised (female homosexuality was never illegal - Queen Victoria refused to believe that women would do such things).

Throughout the 1980s, lesbians and gays have been subjected to *new* repressive legislation. The Tory government has led a moral offensive directed predominantly against lesbians and gay men and ushered in laws which they say will 'protect' and uphold traditional family values. This has escalated since the advent of the Aids 'epidemic'.

The most notorious of these laws were: the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which classified "an act of indecency" as a "serious arrestable of-

fence"; Clause 28 of the Local Government Bill which, in 1987, banned the 'promotion' of homosexual literature in schools, libraries etc; and, this year, Clause 30 (formerly 25) of the Criminal Justice Bill which turned a series of consensual acts, listed in the 1956 and 1967 Sexual Offences Acts into "serious" crimes.

Such legislation has obviously rolled back the rights of lesbians and gays within the country. It, and the Aids panic, has also given justification for anti-homosexual bigotry. Physical assaults on homosexuals have risen dramatically over the last decade, and gay men in particular have been subjected to a number of hideous attacks. Gallop, the Gay London Police Monitoring Group, stated in December of last year that 25% of all its calls are now about 'queerbashing'. It says things are still getting worse.

Of course the main problem is not groups of semi-lumpen thugs. The courts demonstrated their homophobia when, towards the end of last year, eight gay men were given prison sentences which totalled more than 25 years in the well publicised 'Old Bailey

a male citizen sex with women was viewed principally for the purposes of reproduction, sex with men the height of spiritual pleasure.

The morals and values of ancient Greek society are far removed from the norms and ethics which operate under today's modern capitalist state. The sexual morality of the ancient Greeks was a result of the extreme oppression of women and the fact that their social status was that of a slave (ie, a speaking tool); who would want to make love to a *thing*, the high minded philosophical Greek reasoned. Homosexuality as the *ruling sexuality* was also the product of a warrior culture. Sexual relationships between mature men and boys was encouraged to aid the manly education of the young, homosexuality was also used to bond the males as a military force - if you loved someone you would die for them. All this took place under a definite historical society and ultimately served to preserve the ruling position of the slave owning class.

Nowadays, under capitalism, sexual norms and values are different but are still needed in order to

Oppression

protect the interests of the ruling capitalist class. But it is precisely these norms and values which lay the basis for the social oppression of lesbians and gays. As a system, capitalism has existed for hundreds of years and, like all other class systems, it operates by particular laws which govern the major institutions within society. In turn, these institutions protect the rights, privileges and status of its ruling class.

One of the major institutions within capitalism, the family, plays a key role in upholding what are continually described as "traditional family values", ie, the 'natural' role of men and women to fall in love, marry and raise children etc. But for the odd exception we are repeatedly told how this has always been the case; anything outside of this practice is 'unnatural'. It is acceptable that adults have sexual partners from the opposite sex for example, but same-sex relationships are taboo and morally offensive.

However, and as mentioned earlier, history has shown that moral and sexual views are, and will continue to be, products of definite historical and social circumstances. The supposedly monogamous nuclear family that exists today within capitalist society is an institution formed by the particular historical stage of development. A couple of hundred years ago it existed in a different form. This is not to say that homosexual oppression was not present within society during that particular period. On the contrary, men convicted of 'sodomy' were often hanged or faced long prison sentences. But as society changed and developed, so did the structure of the family - and with it social attitudes and values.

In its early days capitalism did not require the

told what we can and cannot do socially and taught what is correct and acceptable sexual behaviour.

Women, of course, are oppressed within the family. They are the sex which is primarily expected to have to live up to rigid social and moral ethics instilled in early childhood. In their role as housewife, for example, women attend to their husband's needs thus keeping them in good running order to perform their role as wage labourers. It is she who comforts and provides emotional support for the frustration produced in the husband from working long hours for little money. Rather than being turned against the system which causes such emotions, this frustration is absorbed by the comforting wife.

It is precisely because lesbians and gay men challenge the traditional image and structure of the family that they are a continual problem for the capitalist class. If the bourgeois family unit is threatened in any way, so is the system as a whole. This is why lesbians and gay men are often labelled immoral, unnatural, indecent and social deviants. This serves the capitalist class well as it allows them to divert attention from the real source of society's problems, capitalism itself, onto innocent people within the population. The function of the family, therefore, makes it a key institution for the ruling capitalist class, allowing it to maintain its dominant position over the exploited working class.

Gays and Aids

The post 1945 capitalist boom laid the material foundations for class consensus and liberal attitudes in Britain and other imperialist countries. During the 1950s, a steadily growing standard of living and social peace saw the welfare state created in order to facilitate capitalism's expansion. All this lessened the burden on the family to look after children or its other members.

Traditional bourgeois values such as hard work, duty, respect for authority and the belief in the sanctity of the family began to diminish. Of course, the family was still vitally important to the bourgeoisie, but with the development of the welfare system, it received less of an ideological bolstering from the capitalist class than before, abortion and male homosexuality were decriminalised.

What applied above also applied below. From gigs of the 'swinging 60s' the attitude towards lesbians and gays became considerably more tolerant among the mass of people. Despite this, in the 1980s things underwent a sea change. With the post-war boom long at an end, capitalism was now facing decay. The ruling class again had to find scapegoats for the system's problems. The lesbian and gay community fitted the bill.

Needless to say, it is not only lesbians and gay men who have been used as scapegoats for capitalism's problems. But with HIV/Aids in the early 1980s, the ruling class had the perfect microscopic gift that could divert attention away from capitalism's giant troubles. The 'gay plague' was invented and used as a scaremongering device with which to create widespread panic throughout the British population and enforce the "traditional family values" so dear to the interests of the ruling class.

Scaremongering and the use of moral panics are hardly new weapons in the armoury of the ruling class. Throughout history, different groups have been labelled as a threat to 'civilised' society. Under Nero it was the Christians, in medieval society it was Hussites and so-called witches, while in our time communists have been the main butt of media, academic and parliamentary hate campaigns, who can doubt that in the 1980s homosexuals were added to the list.

The first recorded Aids case in Britain was in 1982. At that time, support for the establishment was running high following 'victory' in the Falklands war. Revealingly, it was not until 1986, after increased economic decay and deepening social crisis, that the scaremongering campaign concerning the 'gay plague' was unleashed with full force by the ruling class.

Leaflets about the disease were distributed to millions in every household throughout Britain. Television commercials displaying sinister, threatening scenes about the effects of Aids were screened

each evening at peak hours. Huge posters were erected throughout every town and city in the country warning us to think twice about who we were sleeping with that night.

The common theme of this propaganda was the emphasis on 'safe sex': the less sexual partners you had, the less chance you would have of catching the virus. If you did succumb to bodily temptations, condoms could save your life.

To a certain degree this is obviously true. You only have to look through history to see that 'sleeping about' could bring on diseases such as syphilis or gonorrhoea which, in some cases, would lead to death. Even today though, with the advances in medicine, there is still no such thing as 'safe sex' if you have sex with another person: only masturbation can guarantee a disease-free sex life. As such, the campaign could not be seen as something used by the government to 'educate' the masses. On the contrary, Aids and its effects on the population as a whole. No effective information was conveyed on safer sex, no adequate funding provided to support effective medical research. The intention was to use the hype to reinforce Thatcher's cherished 'Victorian values'.

As we stated in *The Leninist* No44, December 1986, as an "epidemic", Aids does not compare with real life plagues; in 1919 the innocuous sounding Spanish flu outbreak finished off half a million Americans and 20 million globally. By the beginning of 1990, there had only been 1,142 deaths associated with the Aids in Britain, the vast majority of these coming from the "high-risk" groups - intravenous drug users, diabetics and gay men.

Aids is not a "gay plague". It is a disease that gay men are particularly vulnerable to because of the type of sex they participate in and the social climate within which this takes place. This is particularly true for covert gays, whose sexual encounters are clandestine, furtive, spontaneous and unplanned - a breeding ground for HIV infection. Such conditions are hardly perfect for gay men to take adequate precautions to protect their health!

The establishment has managed, so far, to get away with perpetuating the idea that straight people are equally at risk from Aids as gay men. As such, they have been able to justify repressive laws which were introduced to "uphold traditional values and morals" within society. Of course, such morals are anti-gay, as is the legislation which upholds them. Section 28, for example, makes it illegal to promote homosexual literature in schools and libraries, while Clause 30, among other things, restricts the right of lesbians and gay men to foster children.

While heterosexuals within society are not immune to the disease there is little evidence to suggest that, in Britain, it is significantly spreading in this section of the population. However, from the establishment's point of view, so long as the population as a whole is worrying about how not to catch Aids and its thoughts are kept off issues such as rising unemployment, homelessness, poverty, cut-backs in education and the crisis in the NHS, their position remains secure.

The Way Forward

With the introduction of Clause 30, the establishment has again attacked the rights and individual freedoms of lesbians and gays. The draconian sentiments of Clause 30 are epitomised by the fact that gay men, for example, could now find themselves serving a prison sentence for "indecent" by simply winking at each other.

Not surprisingly, there have been angry demonstrations and stunts against such reactionary laws, but the way forward for any lesbian and gay rights movement necessitates a wider political perspective than it has at the moment... what they all ignore is the class question. The divisions within capitalist society mean that there are working class lesbians and gays and capitalist lesbians and gays; there are socialist gays and Tory gays. In other words, there are those who wish to maintain the system and those who have a vested interest in overthrowing it.

Basing a campaigning strategy on individuals 'coming out', prioritising people's sexual identity over the class struggle, leads not only to the isolation

of thousands of gay workers who, for whatever reason, are not prepared to admit their sexual orientation, but also thousands of 'straight' workers who are willing to take up the fight for lesbian and gay rights in general, let alone the millions who need to be won to this.

We have already seen the outcome of the sectional approach - in 1987 leaders of the anti-Clause 28 campaign not only refused to allow straights within the campaign against the Clause but also bisexuals, on the grounds that they had a choice! Failing to link the struggles of lesbians and gays with the working class, both gay and straight, ignores the power of collective action and ultimately leads to reactionary outcomes.

Other activists within the lesbian and gay movement rely on 'progressive' elements within parliament and the establishment in general. Michael Cashman, actor and chairperson of the gay campaigning group, Stonewall, announced on Newsnight (BBC2 July 29) that the 'progressive' statements of John Major in July concerning homosexuals should be encouraged and spread to other sections of Britain's institutions (Major had announced that the restrictions on lesbians and gays holding certain offices within the Civil Service had now been removed and that there was now no longer the need for people to hide their sexuality).

There is nothing progressive about John Major. Any suggestion that there is is absurd. Over the past decade, he and his party have ushered in the most draconian anti-gay legislation seen for years. Attacks on the lesbian and gay community have increased, fuelled by this legislation, while the courts of the land have now been granted even greater powers to jail homosexuals for the type of sex they participate in. The Tories have no interest whatsoever in fighting for the rights of lesbians and gays.

The Labour Party too, surprise surprise, has done nothing to support the rights of homosexuals. Currently, to say that Kinnock and his party have voiced little opposition to Clause 30 would be an understatement. Indeed, with the general election on the horizon, the Labour Party wants to look as respectable as possible to the electorate - something which cannot be done by supporting even the most basic demands of homosexuals. Kinnock may harp on about how bad assaults on lesbians and gays have become for example, but the solutions he proposes would do nothing to end such attacks.

Chris Smith, the only 'open' gay MP, mentions in *Tribune* that the Labour Party "demonstrates an awareness of the concerns of our community about the rising tide of violence against lesbians and gay men, and that proper policing and protection are needed" (June 28 1991). This type of hollow, empty rhetoric has been heard before and is not entirely dissimilar to that other well known bastion of lesbian and gay rights - the Liberal Democrats.

The "policing and protection" that both parties speak of, of course, the policing and protection operated by the British police: the force which raids gay bars wearing rubber gloves for fear of catching Aids; which turns its head to reports of queerbashing, which acts as agents provocateurs, arresting gay men for "indecent" at "cottages" throughout the country; which is infected with homophobic attitudes in powerful positions throughout its state structure.

Protection for the lesbian and gay community is urgently needed, but policed and operated by our class, both gay and straight, under communist guidance. Calling on the state's police to protect homosexuals or setting up joint police-pub committees, as one gay pub in Manchester has done, is not the way forward.

In order to advance the struggle of lesbians and gays, all workers, regardless of sexual orientation, must be convinced of the need to take up the fight for gay rights. Our job as communists must be to take this struggle into the workplace and other sections of the community, defending lesbians and gays from attacks on their lifestyles and linking the fight with other issues that directly affect our class - whether they be about striking back against unemployment, fighting to defeat the poll tax or campaigning against imperialist war. 'Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners' in 1984-5 set a good example.

The revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism is inseparable from the most resolute defence of the rights of lesbians and gays. After the October Revolution in 1917, one of the first reforms initiated by the Bolsheviks was the complete removal of all legislation discriminating against lesbians and gays in the Soviet Union. This is living proof that, as long as Stalin is viewed as an aberration and not a natural outcome to revolution, it is only socialism that can lay the basis for the ending of homosexual oppression.

The triumph of the Communist Party and working class in Britain will ensure the same thing. With the overthrow of capitalism and as socialism progresses to communism there will be no more need to look for scapegoats.

Gareth Phillips



working class to live in a secure family unit. Capitalism tore apart the family. Merciless extension of the working day, child and female labour destroyed one generation of workers after another. However, as the source of new labour from Ireland and the countryside began to dry up so capitalism's need for a self-reproducing labour force came to the fore. This and the fact that the working class was beginning to organise for its own protection created the material conditions for the birth of the modern family.

This type of family unit is particularly useful to capitalism as it produces one of the basic commodities needed for the system to continue, namely labour power. Without this commodity, without the working class, capitalism would not exist. Furthermore, this requirement is produced cheaply from the point of view of the capitalists since they do not have to pay for the production of children or their upkeep. The next generation of workers are fed, clothed, housed and cared for *gratis* within the family. The next generation is also socialised into accepting the ethics and values of capitalism. From birth we are



After visiting a well known left wing bookshop in central London I watched an individual approach the smarter dressed passers by. "Have you got a bank account in this country?" he asked them. "Are you interested in current affairs?" No, this wasn't one of Rupert Murdoch's employees trying to flog subscriptions to satellite TV. It was an attempt to get people to take a "current affairs magazine". The "current affairs magazine" turned out to be Living Marxism. So this is how the RCP fights capitalism: if you can't beat 'em ...

In May of last year a certain Vitaly Tretyakov, then deputy editor of Moscow News, was pontificating about the balance of power in the Soviet Union in an article in 7 Days, predecessor of the Euro's Changes: "The best thing for Gorbachev would be to keep up this fragile balance of power during the 1990s ... If political luck does not desert him, in a couple of years the Soviet Union will become a US-type confederation with a Japanese-type market economy and a strong French-type presidential system." Political "luck" or not, August's counterrevolution will certainly leave what was the Soviet Union a Balkan-type mess, with a Turkish-type market economy and a weak British-type head of state!

While building for the UWC's lobby of the TUC, our supporters took part in a picket of a bookshop in Glasgow - Clyde Books - which had refused to sell copies of The Leninist. The reason given was that the Provisional Central Committee did not exist! This interesting philosophical problem unravels somewhat when you understand that the bookshop is controlled by the Scottish district of the Euro organisation, soon to fragment into the Democratic Left, 'Scottish Communist Party' and thus to oblivion. Glasnost? Get out of here...

No wonder your average SWPer is so well informed. Browsing (as you do) through their internal bulletin - "Party Notes" - for August 27, we find this assessment of our good selves. "A Grade A bunch of Stalinoid nutters who print a rag called 'The Leninist'. (Among their loony dreams is a plan to relaunch the 'Daily Worker'!). Bear in mind the rigour of the SWP's internal theoretical life next time you try to talk politics to one of them. Its leaders clearly can't read our paper without moving their lips.

OUR HISTORY

Tragedy of Sylvia Pankhurst: Beyond sectarianism

The formation of the CPGB and its early years: documents, resolutions and manifestos



Sylvia Pankhurst

SYLVIA PANKHURST took the lead in the setting up of the so-called Communist Party - British Section of the Third International on June 19 1920; it had Edgar Whitehead as secretary, TJ Watkins as treasurer and herself as editor of *Workers Dreadnought*, its official organ.

Of course the Third International was totally opposed to her move. It involved a scattering of individuals from the South Wales Socialist Society and Socialist Labour Party rumps, but it was little more than her Workers Socialist Federation under a new name. The formation of the CP-BSTI was therefore an act of rank sectarianism, not least because the overwhelming mass of communists in Britain were on the verge of coming together to form the CPGB.

In spite of this, or maybe because of it, and her known leftist attitude towards standing in elections and affiliation to the Labour Party, Lenin saw to it that Sylvia Pankhurst was able to avoid special branch agents and was smuggled via Norway into Soviet Russia. Arriving during the course of Comintern's 2nd Congress she found herself and Willie Gallacher - also a delegate from Britain - targets of Lenin's anti-'left' communist polemic (see *Left-wing communism and Speeches at the 2nd Congress*).

The debates and votes at the 2nd Congress saw the 'left' communists decisively defeated. However, where Gallacher returned to Britain a convinced Leninist determined to unite all communists into the CPGB, Pankhurst stuck to her 'infantile' views, still dismissing the CPGB as the CPGB ("British Socialist Party").

Nevertheless the momentum towards unity was unstoppable. At its National Inaugural Conference at Gorton, Manchester, the CP-BSTI voted to "join the conference proposed by the Executive Committee of the Third International".

Are we in the Third International?

Our statement in last week's issue, that the Communist Party is part of the Third International, is challenged by W McLaine, of the Communist Party (BSP). We quote, therefore, from the theses governing this question, which

was carried by the Second Congress of the Third International:

"The Second Congress of the Third International considers as not correct, the views regarding the relations of the Party to the class and to the masses, and the non-participation of the Communist Parties in the bourgeois parliaments and reactionary labour unions, which have been precisely refuted in the special resolutions of the present congress, and defended in full by the present congress, and defended in full by the 'Communist Labour Party of Germany' [Communist Workers Party - ed] and also partially by the 'Communist Party of Switzerland', by the organ of the 'West European Secretariat of the Communist International' *Communismus* in Amsterdam, and by several of our Dutch comrades; further, by certain communist organisations in England, as for instance, the 'Workers Socialist Federation'. Also by the 'IWW' in America, the 'Shop Steward Committees' in England, and so forth.

Nevertheless, the Second Congress of the Third International considers possible and desirable the immediate affiliation of such of these organisations which have not already done so officially..."

The Congress having passed this resolution, the Executive of the Third International declared that a new United Communist Party should be formed in Britain, and asked the delegates from the two Communist Parties, the English Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committees, and the Scottish Workers' Committee to recommend the following proposal to their respective parties. This the delegates from the respective parties including those of the Communist Party (BSP) unanimously agreed to do; not a protest was raised from any quarter. The proposal is, that within four months, a conference shall be called, at which shall assist the two Communist Parties, the English and Scottish Workers' Committees, the Welsh Unofficial Industrial and Committees, and Communist Movement, and any other Communist Organisations desirous of being represented. A Committee of two representatives of the societies above named, is to make the arrangements for the conference.

The Communist Party at its Manchester Conference decided to accept the call of the Third International, to take part in this proposed conference. Is the Communist Party (BSP), also prepared to do so?

Workers Dreadnought October 9 1920, Vol 7, No29

The CPGB did press for unity, and from August 20 to January 1921 a series of meetings and discussions took place to that end. The majority of the CP-BSTI were obviously sincere in their desire for unity, indeed at its Cardiff conference on December 4-5 1920 it not only agreed to unity but voted 15 to 3 to accept the Leninist theses and resolutions of Comintern's 2nd Congress. Pankhurst was not able to vote against. Since October 20 she had been in prison, charged with inciting members of the armed forces "to

mutiny and lawlessness" - something she did not deny. From prison she made her views known on the supposed "non-communists" in her own organisation. More than that though, her sectarianism was leading her straight into the worst possible individualist conclusions. She imagined herself at the head of a 'left' faction in the CPGB and threatened to use her paper, the *Workers Dreadnought* to these narrow ends. Where the genuine communist subordinates the self to the fight for the Party, she was putting her individual project before the Party.

Unity and the Workers Dreadnought

Dear comrades,

On January 29th and 30th a Conference of the Communist Party (BSTI), the Communist Party of Great Britain, Scottish Communist Labour Party, and others, will be held with the object of merging into a united party.

If I were free to attend this Conference, I should advocate the formation of a united party under the following conditions:

1. That the left wing elements keep together and form a strong, compact left block within the party. Lenin advised this when I discussed the question with him in Moscow, and I think the advice is sound [obviously a complete fabrication - ed]. The left block should have its own conveners, and its own special sittings prior to party conferences, to decide its policy. In the Italian Socialist Party, the right, left and centre sections hold their special sittings each evening during the party's conference week, in order to formulate the policy for the next day's session. The policy is thus classified and hammered out. The same procedure should be followed here by our left block. The activities of the block will not be confined to party conferences. Every district will have its left block, working to mould the policy of the party, to act as the 'ginger' group and give the lead.
2. The left elements should insist that the constitution of the party shall leave them free to propagate their policy in the party and in the Third International as a whole.
3. The entire executive of the party, and all the officials, should be elected at the inaugural conference, and thereafter at party conferences. This is a question of vital importance. All officials and members of the executive should be subject to recall by a special party conference, called on the initiative of one-third of the branches.

I believe that a united party ought to be formed. I have not changed my view that there are elements in the Communist Party of Great Britain (BSP), which are not revolutionary, not communist, and which belong in spirit to the Second International. In the Communist Party (BSTI), there are also in my opinion, non-communist elements.

I believe that the interests of communism can best be served at this juncture by forming a united party and fighting to make it a genuine Communist Party, and to expel from office all those who are not communist revolu-

tionaries.

When the Communist Party (BSTI) merges in the new united Communist Party, as I believe it will, or if the Communist Party (BSTI) should split into separate factions, the conditions under which I placed the *Workers Dreadnought* at the disposal of the Party as its organ, will have ceased to operate.

The *Workers Dreadnought* will then become an independent organ, giving an independent support to the Communist Party from the left wing standpoint. The paper will be run by those who are now responsible for it, until my release from prison.

E Sylvia Pankhurst
Workers Dreadnought January 15 1921, Vol 7, No43

Her own CP (BSTI) comrades must have been disturbed by this undisciplined threat. It must have encouraged their desire for unity with serious communists.

Communist unity

A further meeting was held in Leeds on Saturday last of the committee appointed to organise the convention to establish a united Communist Party. Those present included A Macmanus and A Inkpin, representing the Communist Party of Great Britain; JV Leckie and J Maclean, representing the Communist Labour Party; and R Beech and T Watkins, representing the Communist Party (BSTI).

The Unity Convention was definitely fixed to be held at Leeds on Saturday and Sunday, January 29th and 30th. Representation will be of branches of participating organisations, as well as of independent communist groups willing to join the unity party on the basis of one delegate for the first 25 members and one delegate for additional membership above 25. Voting at the conference will be on the basis of one vote for every 25 members represented. Notices convening the conference will be issued this week and all inquiries and applications for delegates' credentials should be addressed to Albert Inkpin, 16 King Street, Covent Garden, London WC2.

Workers Dreadnought January 15 1921, Vol 7, No43.

When Sylvia Pankhurst was finally released in May 1921 the Leeds convention had taken place. Former CP-BSTI secretary, ET Whitehead, sent her an official letter repudiating *Workers Dreadnought* as an organ of the Communist Party - during Pankhurst's imprisonment it had been run as a factional journal by her faithful friend Nora Smythe. From here on in it was downhill all the way. Over the summer of 1921 Pankhurst resumed editorship and in August, desperate for funds, the paper was turned into a £1 a share corporation along the lines of Tony Chater's *Morning Star*. As a result the CPGB broke all links with her and after a brief lash up with Herman Gorter, the Dutch 'left' communist, Sylvia Pankhurst drifted out of working class politics ... one of the many to die politically from the 'infantile disease' of individualism. She ended her days in Ethiopia, dying in September 1960 a friend and devotee of Emperor Haile Selassie.

REVIEWS

SWP r-r-revolutionaries

Duncan Blackie, *Socialism And The Labour Party - A Dream Betrayed*, Socialist Workers Party, pp45, £1.20

THERE ARE two main elements to this pamphlet. First, we are provided with a brief but relevant and informative account of the ways in which the three Labour governments since World War II have prioritised "restoring the profitability of British capitalism at a time of deep crisis" (p40). The solutions to these crises have always been at the expense of the working class. Such attacks from Labour governments have included mass unemployment, attempts at wage restraint and attacks on trade unions, and Blackie goes on to give more details on ways the working class has, over the years, been sold out by the Labour Party. While this is interesting and provides factual ammunition to discharge at Labour Party defencists, it is more important to look at the second component and that is the political function this party serves.

Blackie's assessment of the role of the Labour party, and what it represents politically is broadly correct. He recalls some of what Lenin said about the Labour Party in 1920, where he makes it clear that the content of its actions and its political tactics determine whether a party is the party of the proletariat. On this point, with regard to Labour, Lenin was clear: "the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because although it is made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act in the spirit of the bourgeoisie" (p11).

Later on he identifies it as "the party of the trade union leaders. Lenin called it the 'political expression of the trade union bureaucracy'" (p13). We agree with his description of Labour as "a capitalist workers' party" which supports "the continuation of the capitalist system" and where "everything is subordinated to the need to achieve, and then retain, government office ... this makes Labour the prisoner of the capitalist system, not its master."

Fair enough, but what is the SWP going to do in practice about it? As far as this pamphlet goes most readers would expect chapter five, entitled "The Alternative", to produce a conclusive, hard-hitting climax, where the SWP would forcefully and comprehensively argue for the reader to join them in the struggle for a revolutionary alternative to Labour. While the final fifteen lines do attempt to do this and they rightly claim that, "Now more than ever, the alternative which can lead us forward is both desperately needed and can be built" we know the SWP is not the organisation to do it. I am sure most readers are familiar with the way this organisation tails the Labour Party in practice. Remember during the recent Gulf war the way they tailed CND and the Labour left in the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf. Of course in relation to general elections in the recent period, we have seen them telling the working class to 'vote Labour but...' and the smart money is on them proposing a similar line for the coming election.

It seems that they will not be standing any of their own candidates at the election. Although this is a strange position for a revolutionary organisation that claims a membership of 6,000 plus no doubt it would be reasonable to assume they would be supporting other candidates standing on a revolutionary platform, including our four communist candidates.

However from talking to SWP members in one of these constituencies it appears that they will not be voting

for, let alone campaigning for our candidate. Instead they will call for a vote for ... Labour. No doubt this will be their position in the other three. This is despite all the arguments presented by Blackie in this pamphlet, including in his final paragraph where he calls for an organisation "dedicated to channelling people's anger against the system towards its downfall - rather than one that ultimately props it up".

If they end up 'voting-Labour-but' against our candidates then it shows that they see genuine communists as more of a problem than either capitalism in Britain or its political expression in the workers movement - the Labour Party. This is a reactionary position and lines them up with the bourgeoisie against us. However it is consistent with their recent celebrations over the "collapse of communism".

They say workers should have no illusions in Labour, but it is they who are one of the best organisations at actually building and reinforcing such illusions. This is classic economism; making r-r-revolutionary noises, but on each occasion, when it comes to the political crunch, conceding the field unchallenged to Labour and, thus, to the bourgeoisie.

Jim Cook

White feminist

Francine Du Plessix Gray, *Soviet Women walking the tightrope*, Virago 1991, pp208, £6.99

IN THIS book Francine Du Plessix Gray says that she sets out to examine the obstacles which "have stood in the way of Soviet women's self-fulfilment" in the years since the revolution (p190). Written in 1988, when perestroika was beginning to gather force, it is a compilation of the views and experiences of both the author and some women whom she interviews.

A loyal and proud descendant of exiled White Russians, her view is a totally reactionary one, harking back to those halcyon pre-revolutionary days when the women of the Russian bourgeoisie lived off the blood, sweat and tears of the peasant and working class millions. Thus when she goes to speak to Soviet women, she prefers to speak to the intelligentsia, to the proto-bourgeoisie, and it is their views which she attempts to give as representative of all Soviet women.

Despite the many shortcomings of this bourgeois and atypical vision of Soviet women which Du Plessix Gray presents us with, something may be gained by reading it.

Firstly, it gives us an insight into the retrogressive nature of perestroika as reflected in the attitudes of its proponents. Many of the women with whom she speaks deride the gains of Soviet power, deride the fact that so many Soviet women are employed as engineers, biologists, scientists. Soviet women are too masculine, they exclaim! They should become more feminine, less aggressive, more home-loving, and less of a threat to their poor unassertive male counterparts!

The author too is dismayed at the "abundance of superwomen", despite her professed commitment to women's equality (p48). The 'aggressiveness' of Soviet women makes her uncomfortable, she admits, and she welcomes perestroika, which aims to create "a society of less aggressive females who can at last regain their womanliness" (p49). This attitude is reflected in the words of that latter-day hero Gorbachev, who stated way back then that he would do whatever he could "to make it possible for women to

return to their purely womanly mission" (p191). This mission leads of course back to women's 'rightful' place in the home, to their 'natural' role in childrearing, back to the reactionary biological determinism of the past.

To compound matters for Soviet women, the tide of counter-revolution has brought with it a wave of religious fervour, bound to re-establish the repression of many women. Even the author herself is forced to admit, despite her enthusiasm for perestroika, that "Soviet society seems to be engaging in a powerful backlash against the emancipation of women brought about" by the Russian Revolution (p190).

Even though the author gives a totally bourgeois anti-communist analysis of the years since the revolution, one can nevertheless see both the successes and failures of bureaucratic socialism throughout the book.

She quite rightly highlights the contradictory nature of many of the gains made by women, a prime example being the problem of 'overburdening'; While 91% of Soviet women are fully employed, the problem of domestic labour has never really been tackled. Thus most women return after a hard day's work to the drudgery of housework and the burden of childcare, apparently with not much help from their male partners. Domestic labour has never been socialised in the way that was intended, and the family has remained to this extent privatised, as under capitalism. Moreover, this prevented women from going to meetings and becoming involved in politics, and the political processes remained dominated by men.

Health care was and is still today a big problem, with the lack of birth control programmes making abortion the only viable method of birth control for Soviet women. Again the bureaucratic nature of the system meant the lack of proper facilities for childbirth on a widespread basis. The often barbaric treatment of women during labour has been well documented.

Much of the liberating gains made in the immediate aftermath of the revolution, such as liberal divorce and abortion legislation were reversed in the Stalin years, when the emphasis was on glorifying motherhood and increasing the population. Restrictions on divorce and abortion were again lifted following Stalin's death, but there remained a contradiction between Soviet women's role in production and reproduction. This has only been partly answered by the provision of creche facilities at the workplaces of working class women, often they are of poor quality.

Because socialism is class society contradictions will inevitably remain, as will the oppression of women. This of course will not fade except with the dawning of the higher stages of socialism. Under bureaucratic socialism the contradictions do not dwindle, because that society is not pushing forward towards communism. Soviet women's equality was, in many ways purely formal, and much can and must be criticised. However, that said, gains were made, and as such should be defended.

Even formal equality meant the development of a far more progressive view of women. It meant the development of a society where women could walk late at night without fear of rape or attack even in the big cities. Most importantly, women in what was the Soviet Union are almost all involved in production. They are regarded, and regard themselves, first and foremost as workers and see the workplace as the centre of their lives, rather than the family. Because of this they are assertive of their role in society and production, and will not be chased off back to the home as easily as the new bourgeoisie might wish.

The independence of the working class women of the former Soviet Union must be defended and the Soviet Union learnt from as the highest expression of women's equality thus far.

Siobhan McLaughlin

ACTION

Communist Party

London Seminars: 5pm Sundays. Details 071-431 3135

This seminar series provides collective discussion to assist the CPGB Provisional Central Committee in drawing up its Draft Programme, section by section. The Draft Programme will be published subsequently for discussion within the class, as a guide to action and as a rallying point for the reorganising of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Join in the debate. Fight to forge the weapon of the proletarian party in Britain. (The second part of each seminar is a weekly discussion on current political developments.):

September 22: Economic demands.

September 29: War, peace and foreign policy.

October 6: The transition to communism - socialism.

October 13: The transition to communism - communism.

October 20: Specifics of socialism in Britain.

Communist Party streetwork and campaigning in the four constituencies where we have adopted prospective parliamentary candidates:

Glasgow Central (Tam Dean Burn)

Rhondda (Mark Fischer)

Bethnal Green and Stepney (Stan Kelsey)

Brent East (Anne Murphy)

Offers of help please to 071-431 3135

Posters (A2) and stickers: "Leninism Lives!" and "CPGB".

Ring 071-431 3135, or send donation with order to our box number.

Reclaim Brick Lane! Sunday October 20: Join CPGB activists and anti-fascists against the fascist paper sale, 11am (sharp) corner of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road, London, E1.

National demonstration against racist attacks, Sunday November 10: Join the CPGB contingent 1pm, Aldgate East tube. March through East End.

Hands Off Ireland!

HOI! EASTER MARCH:

Easter Saturday 1992 (April 18)

Troops out now!

Self determination for the Irish nation!

London: activist meetings and actions. Details 071-431 3135.

HOI! T-Shirts: Be the sharpest anti-imperialist on your street. T-shirts, all extra large, £6 each (including p&p) from our box number.

Workers Theatre Movement

Performers for WTM Club *The Internationale* please contact Tam on 071-431 3135.

Rehearsals in London. Phone Tam on 071-431 3135 or write to WTM, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX for details of WTM activities.

Unemployed Workers Charter

UWC NATIONAL MARCH AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

London, February 1992

Send SAE for UWC petition and sponsorship letter.

London organising meetings: For details ring 071-431 3135.

Unemployed Organiser - 20p each plus 10p p&p. Send for details (offbulk order rates).

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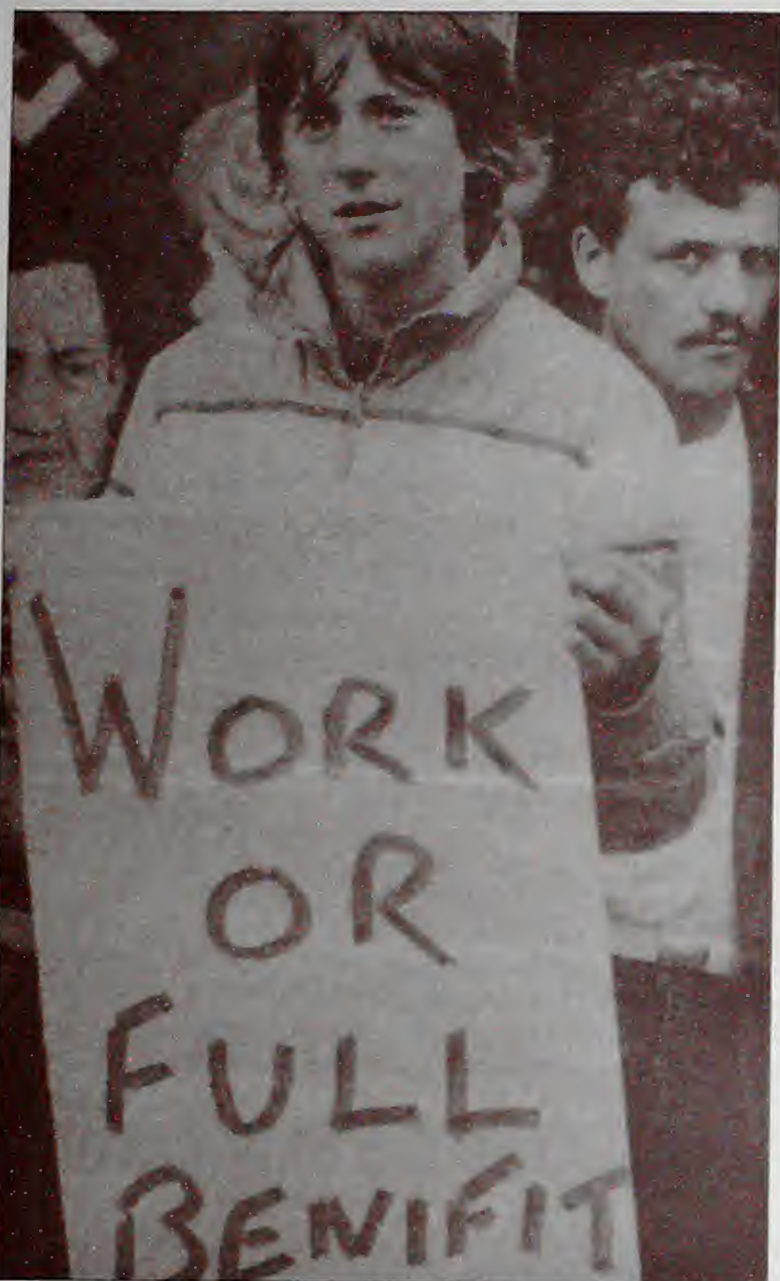
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Unemployed Workers Charter TUC lobby 1991



The UWC fights for the independent organisation of unemployed workers alongside the employed

ON THE night of Friday August 30 1991, supporters of the Unemployed Workers Charter journeyed to Glasgow from around the country for a weekend of activity in the working

class capital of Scotland culminating in a lobby of the Trades Union Congress. The lobby forms a fundamental part of the UWC's ongoing campaign against the government's slave-labour schemes, Employment Training and

Youth Training. The TUC has given support to these cheap labour schemes, and over the past five years the UWC has built lobbies of the TUC's conferences in order to expose this crime by the misleaders of the labour movement.

Saturday August 31 1991.

After offloading baggage and equipment we commenced work at 9am. Comrades were organised into teams to maximise our coverage of the city. While most concentrated on streetwork in the city centre, others publicised a benefit social we had organised for the Sunday night in aid of the lobby.

Streetwork.

The UWC has been busy building its petition. Directed at the TUC, it condemns its stance on ET and YT and calls on it to cease cooperation with these slave labour schemes. The number of signatures amassed so far exceeds 50,000. Despite this the TUC has refused to accept the petition or even to receive a delegation from the UWC, the reason "the UWC has no standing in relation to congress business".

The real reason that these fat cats refuse to meet the UWC is that they know they have no answers to the questions we will pose them. The mandarins of the TUC are too busy not rocking Labour's boat and enjoying the expense account perks of the bureaucrat's life to worry about the unemployed. Far better, they reason, to cut funding to the 'tea and sympathy' unemployed centres, than cut their £30,000 salaries to the average level of their members.

Our petition received an enthusiastic response from people in Glasgow, as did our paper *Unemployed Organiser*.

We also staged a series of street meetings in order to explain the plight of the unemployed and our perspectives. More than one person asked us why we were placing so much store in

the stance of the TUC if we felt they were not helping the unemployed.

Our answer was clear. We are bringing home to the workers of Britain, both employed and unemployed, the fact that the present TUC leadership acts as a brake to the struggles of workers. That does not mean we are against the TUC or trade unions. We want them to be effective and effectively led. Until then, however, workers who want to fight unemployment will have to do it independently of the TUC and the other misleaders in the trade union movement. The main demand of the UWC is to organise the unemployed: yes, into the trades unions, but also in a National Unemployed Workers Movement, which must be given a seat on the TUC so that it can represent the unemployed.

Sunday September 1 1991.

Over 150 people attended a lively social, which included poetry from Freddy Anderson, music from the North Staffs Miners Wives Support Group, the Blues Poets and others.

Tam Dean Burn, prospective parliamentary candidate for the CPGB in the Glasgow Central constituency, MC'd the evening and took the opportunity to address the social in a short, punchy speech. He highlighted the problems facing the unemployed in Britain today, and emphasised the necessity for a militant campaigning organisation like the Unemployed Workers Charter, to fight for the rights of the unemployed.

Monday September 2. Lobby of TUC

We began the picket at 8.30am. With rousing slogans ringing around, our picket was a splendid example of militancy and discipline. Not surprisingly, our petition was refused by the TUC, as was our request that a delegation from the UWC be allowed in to address the conference.

Nevertheless we have reason to be pleased. Congress actually voted on its first day to boycott the government's latest "training" con, the Employment Action programme, which promises

nothing to unemployed people apart from 'work experience' - or in other words, a 40 hour week for benefit plus £10.

However it has to be said that this 'principled' stand is too little too late. The TUC has paved the way for this totally cynical Tory attack on the rights of the unemployed through its collaboration with every cheap labour scheme that the government proposed.

If it was serious about helping the unemployed it would throw its weight behind a campaign to *organise* the unemployed to fight for their rights. A boycott, after ten years of collaborationism, is a beginning but simply not enough.

Fringe Meeting.

Our fringe meeting began at 1pm, lunch hour for TUC delegates, a number of whom attended. The discussion and debates centred around the need for a political organisation of the unemployed, of the kind the Unemployed Workers Charter is agitating for.

The contributions from the delegates who attended, not surprisingly, stressed the need to not 'rock the boat': in other words not to spoil the chances of Labour being elected in the next general election. We were told that our goals were honourable, but the need to remove the Tories was the most pressing question. We were told to give Labour a chance, they might not be as bad as we thought! The fact that Labour had been given the chance in 1974 and several times before then, with the same disastrous results, seems to escape such comrades.

Our weekend provided a very useful exercise in high profile campaigning which all our comrades agreed they found extremely stimulating. The response we received has strengthened our belief in the need for an organisation which will fight with vigour for the rights and benefits of the unemployed, and the Unemployed Workers Charter accepts that fight with enthusiasm.

Chris Allen

The Big Con

WITH a flurry of publicity donated by 'concerned' capitalists, a newspaper "produced by the homeless for the benefit of the homeless" was launched in London on September 9. *The Big Issue*, a monthly colour tabloid, is being distributed by teams of homeless people who will keep 40p of the 50p cover cost. The remaining 10p, plus advertising revenue, will go towards "vocational training" schemes for the unemployed and homeless.

TBI was in fact founded by Gordon Roddick, chairman of the Body Shop, after he saw *Street News*, a New York equivalent which sells in the region of 150,000. The producers have plans for a 60,000 circulation, mostly in London but with plans to go national

"within a few months". Its reception from government and charity circles has certainly been warm. Sir George Younger, the Housing Minister, said that "if it succeeds, it will provide jobs for homeless people and money for volunteer groups to invest in further training schemes." According to the homeless charities Shelter and Shac, the publication has the potential to break the spiral of "no-job-no-home, no-home-no-job" that people in these desperate straits are locked into. Apparently, selling *The Big Issue* will alleviate the humiliation of begging.

All of this is charity mongering crap, of course. Flogging a few issues of *TBI* is hardly going to alleviate the problem of homelessness which even according to official figures is massive on the streets of London and other

major cities. The publication itself is unlikely to survive after an initial flush of altruistic enthusiasm. Experience from the US suggests that the public quickly become bored with an overpriced worthy publication with little substance. Also likely to become bored are the homeless vendors themselves. The ones UWCers spoke to on the first few days of its launch reported that, gratuitous press hype notwithstanding, people were not buying in any real numbers. As one told us, "If it wasn't for the job they'd promised me at the end of it, I wouldn't be bothered..."

It would be easy therefore - too easy - to simply dismiss the danger of this type of initiative. The paper reeks of having nothing to say and 28 pages to say it in. The little it does manage

to come out with is in essence propaganda for 'caring capitalism'.

Anita "I'd die for a grand gesture" Roddick (yes, oddly enough, the wife of Gordon, founder of *The Big Issue*) is interviewed on the centre pages of the first issue where she pours forth her patronising and deeply reactionary pro-capitalist views. ("It's what you do with the profits that matters. I'm not a socialist or a Marxist or a Leninist" - no arguments about that, Anita ...)

The message that is being fed to the unemployed and homeless is that they do not need collective solutions to their problems; they just need some get up and go, the right attitude and Bob's your uncle - you are an enterprise capitalist just like Anita Roddick (only a little smaller).

Whatever the fate of this particular

little enterprise (and we wish it a speedy death) the UWC has warned consistently against precisely this type of initiative. If we in the workers' movement do not move to organise the unemployed and the homeless, someone else with more resources - either individual millionaires like the Roddicks or the establishment itself - will move to organise them.

The UWC has circulated a letter calling on the movement to up their commitment to the UWC to help us counter precisely this type of challenge: to make sure that the unemployed are organised as a militant auxiliary of the workers' movement, not as the foot-soldiers of scab-herding, self obsessed reactionaries like 'grand gesture' Roddick and her ilk.

Mark Fischer